

'Now I am even more confident'—Wycombe boss

WYCOMBE Wanderers are hoping it will be third time lucky tonight when they meet Southern League Bedford Town in their FA Cup first round second replay at Loakes Park. In both the previous matches Lady Luck has been unkind to the Amateurs.

When they first met nine days ago at High Wycombe, Wanderers had 70 per cent of the play, but were forced to a replay with a late equaliser.

Then on Wednesday night at Bedford, there were just two minutes of extra time to go when the referee awarded the

harshest of penalty decisions against centre-half Ian Rundle, and Bedford equalised with a spot kick.

But this is Cup football... and both sides know that anything can happen. The only thing that is certain is that Loakes Park will have its biggest crowd for years tonight when more than 10,000 fans are expected.

The strain

Wanderers had the satisfaction of a morale-boosting 3-0 win over Bromley on Saturday, while Bedford went down 4-3 at home to Corby.

Tonight's replay will be the fourth game in ten days for these two sides, and the strain is beginning to tell on Wycombe's amateurs. Skipper and centre-forward Paul Bates dropped out on Saturday with "a cold," but will be fit for tonight.

Goalkeeper John Maskell, who many expected to see in the England amateur side this season, has badly bruised the biceps of his left arm.

Ex-international right-winger, Len Worley, gave Wycombe fans a fright when he was carried off the field on Saturday, but after five minutes touch-

line treatment, he resumed with a strapped-up knee. He, too, will be fit tonight.

So Wycombe will be at full strength.

Yesterday, Wycombe manager, Barry Darvill, commented: "I am still confident. I have been confident all along, but know I am more so than when we went to Bedford last week."

"I think a lot will depend on the state of the pitch. If it stays firm, we shall do better."

Wycombe's line-up will be: J. Maskell; J. Beck, P. Royston; B. Baker, I. Rundle, C. Gale; L. Worley, K. Samuels, P. Bates, T. Horseman, L. Merrick.



TONY HORSEMAN—Wycombe's ace marksman.

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GROUND UNFIT FOR EXTRA TIME IN WYCOMBE TIE

Wycombe Wanderers 1 Bedford Town 1
(Abandoned after 90 minutes)

THE second replay of the first round FA Cup tie between Wycombe Wanderers and Bedford Town, at Wycombe last night was abandoned after 90 minutes play with the score one goal each because of the unfitness of the ground for extra time to be played.

The referee, Mr. A. Dimond, of Harlow New Town, spent some time deciding the drenched and sloping pitch was fit for play. The slope convinced him the ground would drain but in fact the middle churned into a soggy mass within minutes.

Wycombe thumped the ball sensibly and made better progress in the over-elaborate Bedford. Horseman and the bearded Samuels reaped a rich dividend in rebounds from the toiling Bedford defence.

The amateurs, controversially robbed of victory at Bedford, had the unlucky end of another apparent penalty incident when Bedford's left-back, Skinn, appeared to handle the ball. Wycombe's reward was a free kick inches outside the penalty area.

HIGH CENTRES

Collier safe

Merrick and Worley constantly threatened with high centres from the wings, but Collier dealt comfortably with them until he almost presented Horseman with a chance. As in the first replay, Bedford scored the opening goal when mis-

fortune struck Maskell. In the 25th minute Fogg dribbled cleverly past three defenders but his final shot popped back from the post. Maskell tried to gather the ball to his chest but pushed it beyond recall into the goal.

Within seven minutes Samuels was cheered by the 10,000 crowd when he scored the equaliser. Wycombe forced a corner on the left and Merrick's kick was headed well out of Collier's reach. So the clubs were level at half-time.

MANY ERRORS

Conditions appalling

By the second half, the midfield conditions were appalling and the match developed into a catalogue of errors.

Royston, the Wycombe left-back, once kicked the ball from Maskell's hands for a corner; and Bick mis-kicked so completely that Maskell had to produce the save of the match from the isolated Fogg.

Nor were Bedford in any better control as it became clear that skill would be the last quality to resolve this drawn-out stalemate.

Wycombe Wanderers.—J. Maskell; J. Beck, P. Royston; B. Baker, I. Rundle, C. Gale; L. Worley, K. Samuels, P. Bates, A. Horseman, L. Merrick.
Bedford.—Collier, Morgan, Skinn; Willis, Collins, Cooper, Sturrock, Paton, Fogg, Riley, Benning.